

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 23-29, 53 and 54 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1-4, 6, 23 and 26-28 are amended, and withdrawn, non-elected claims 11-22, 30-52 and 55 are cancelled. Applicant reserves the right to file one or more divisional applications to pursue the subject matter of the non-elected claims. The claims are amended to even more clearly distinguish over the applied reference, and to address the objection to claims 1-5 and 53 mentioned in the Office Action.

The amendment to claims 1, 6 and 23 that an inner wall of the air tight chamber is formed of or coated with a material involving little gas release is supported in the original specification at, for example, page 65, line 24 - page 66, line 2. Thus, no new matter is added by the above amendments.

I. Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner is requested to consider the information submitted with the attached Information Disclosure Statement.

II. All Pending Claims are in Condition for Allowance

Applicant notes with appreciation the identification of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 3, 9 and 24-28. Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance, as detailed below.

The Office Action objected to claims 1-5 and 53, asserting that "the stage chamber" lacks antecedent basis in claim 1. The "stage chamber" referred to in claim 1 corresponds to the "airtight stage chamber" defined in claim 1. The word "airtight" has been inserted where appropriate in the claims. Withdrawal of the objection to the claims is requested.

Claims 1, 4-8, 10, 23, 29, 53 and 54 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,473,157 to Nakahara. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Nakahara does not disclose or suggest that chambers CH1 and CH2 are airtight chambers. Accordingly, Nakahara does not disclose or suggest the combinations of features recited in independent claims 1, 6 and 23, in which an inner wall of a member that forms an airtight chamber is formed of or coated with a material involving little gas release.

Accordingly, all pending claims are patentable over Nakahara.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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MAC/ccs

Attachments:

Petition for Extension of Time
Information Disclosure Statement

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